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General and complete disarmament: follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament

Letter dated 27 September 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, observed on 26 September pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/32.

In that regard, and since the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations is coordinating the work of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) from September 2015 to September 2016, I have the honour to inform you that on 26 September 2015 the States members of OPANAL decided to issue a Declaration on the occasion of the International Day (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this Declaration and its annex circulated as a document of the seventieth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 97 (cc).

(*Signed*) Jorge **Montaño**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 27 September 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English/Spanish]

Declaration of the Member States of OPANAL on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

The member States of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), conscious of our historic commitment to global nuclear disarmament,

Proud to belong to Latin America and the Caribbean, the first densely populated region in the world that established a nuclear-weapon-free zone, by means of the Treaty of Tlatelolco,

Realizing that we have served as a political, legal and institutional model for the creation of other nuclear-weapon-free zones in different parts of the world,

Reiterating the full validity of the declarations on nuclear disarmament adopted by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) on 20 August 2013, in Buenos Aires, on 29 January 2014, in Havana, and on 29 January 2015 in Belen,

Reaffirming our rejection of nuclear weapons, which, after 70 years of existence and use, continue to present an imminent danger of destruction to the planet and a risk to international peace and security. Stressing the humanitarian impact caused by the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and by the numerous nuclear tests,

Recognizing that a world without nuclear weapons is essential for the accomplishment of the priority objectives of humanity, those being peace, security and development,

Expressing our concern that half of the annual investment in nuclear arsenals would be sufficient to achieve the internationally agreed development goals for poverty reduction, included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) for 2015.

The States members of OPANAL,

Join in the commemoration, on 26 September 2015, of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, established by resolution 68/32 of the United Nations General Assembly;

Invite the international community to commemorate once again this International Day as part of the global efforts towards achieving the common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons and urge governments, parliaments and civil society to take further action each year to commemorate this International Day;

On this occasion, we, the member States:

1. Reiterate our grave concern in the face of the imminent threat posed by the ongoing existence of nuclear weapons and their potential use or threat of use;

2. Express our deep dismay at the approximately 16 thousand nuclear weapons that still exist and that would cause unacceptable humanitarian consequences due to their immense, uncontrollable destructive capability shown by the use and testing of nuclear weapons in the last 70 years;

3. Recall that this concern is reflected in numerous United Nations resolutions, including Res 1 (I) of 24 January 1946, the first resolution of the General Assembly, as well as in the preamble of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean of 1967, in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of 1968, and in the final document of the First Special Session of the General Assembly on Disarmament (SSOD I), held in 1978;

4. Recall that the First Special Session of the General Assembly on Disarmament (SSOD I) affirmed that "Nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to mankind and to the survival of civilization";

5. Firmly demand that nuclear weapons not be used again, under any circumstances by any actor, which can only be assured by the prohibition and transparent, verifiable and irreversible elimination of all nuclear weapons;

6. Reiterate the pressing need to begin negotiations for the prompt conclusion of a universal and legally binding instrument prohibiting the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and including provisions for their destruction in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner under a multilaterally agreed timetable; and reiterate our commitment to join forces to promote this priority objective;

7. Reiterate our call on all States, in particular nuclear-weapon States, to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in their security and defence doctrines and policies and to comply fully with their legal obligations and unequivocal commitments to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons without further delay;

8. Firmly demand nuclear-weapon States to cease the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and development of new types of these weapons, which is inconsistent with the obligation to adopt effective measures towards nuclear disarmament;

9. Urge nuclear-weapon States that made interpretative declarations concerning the Additional Protocols to the Treaty of Tlatelolco to withdraw them in order to give full and unequivocal security assurances to the States that comprise the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean;

10. Confirm the inalienable right of all States, in conformity with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination;

11. Urge the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their obligations and commitments assumed under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to advance towards the complete elimination of those weapons, and urge them to fully implement the practical steps towards nuclear disarmament agreed at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as the action plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons;

12. Regret that the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (April-May 2015, New York) concluded without reaching the necessary consensus to adopt a final document;

13. Deem it necessary, in the face of current challenges to progress towards a world without nuclear weapons, that the United Nations General Assembly, in this year of the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, marking the 70th anniversary of the nuclear era, undertake decisive efforts to overcome the nuclear disarmament stalemate and advance towards reaching a convention banning and totally eliminating nuclear weapons, thus fulfilling the first resolution of the United Nations General Assembly that requested "the elimination of national arsenals of atomic weapons";

14. Recall that the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 68/32, decided to convene, no later than 2018, a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to review the progress made in this regard;

15. Regret the failure to reach agreement on measures related to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, thus delaying compliance with the Resolution on the Middle East (1995), an integral part of the commitments of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and of the final outcome of the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons;

16. Undertake to continue to work for the implementation of nuclear disarmament education programmes, convinced that they are an effective means for contributing to the consolidation of international peace and security;

17. Reiterate our commitment, in accordance with the Humanitarian Pledge, endorsed by 117 States, all member States of OPANAL among them, to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders, States, international organisations, parliamentarians and civil society, in efforts to stigmatise, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons in light of their unacceptable humanitarian consequences and associated risks;

18. Take pride in the proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace, adopted at the CELAC Summit held in Havana on 29 January 2014, in which we declared the commitment of the States of the region to continue to promote nuclear disarmament as a priority objective and to contribute to general and complete disarmament and the strengthening of confidence among nations;

19. Stress our lifelong commitment to all humankind, primarily to children and youth, to keep our territories forever free from nuclear weapons and to continue to work so that the entire world becomes free again of these weapons of mass destruction, as it was before 1945.

Mexico City, 26 September 2014